

Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree
112 Chandler Street
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March 7, 2016

Planning and Development Committee
Connecticut General Assembly
The Capitol
Hartford CT

Re: Support for substitute **SB 422**: An Act Concerning Residential Water Rates, Public Drinking Water Supply, Emergencies and the Sellers of Bottled Water

Dear Honorable Members of the Committee:

This is my testimony in absentia for the hearing scheduled for Friday, March 11, 2016 on the above bill.

I write as a resident of Windsor in response to the above bill now before you. I have deep concerns about the circumstances which led to this bill, and wish to **support the substitute bill** authored by Senator Beth Bye.

As a member of the clergy, I consider this a grave moral issue because it affects the lives and wellbeing of all our citizens served by the MDC and other water providers in Connecticut. We elect leaders to protect us as citizens and to provide for the general welfare of all residents of the state. In the current instance, I believe the absence of clear policy has resulted in decisions which do the opposite. When we have a drought or some other emergency which affects our water supply, it is residents whose needs must come first, not commercial bottlers.

It is imperative that water rate discounts for bottlers be rescinded – they are not contributing to our social welfare. Indeed they take our water, pollute our environment (especially with plastic bottles and waste), and make a profit off **our** water. Further, I urge the rescission of the Special Sewer Charge discount (currently aka “Clean Water Project Charge”). We ratepayers have contributed for years to the building of the water infrastructure. Corporations should not get discounts for our hard earned assets!

I also believe that an ombuds-committee or watchdog committee for the MDC is clearly imperative, given the circumstances that got us here. Constant vigilance must be our mantra...together.

Finally, we need a clear moratorium on any additional agreements with companies using large amounts of water until we have a state water plan finished and in place. Such a plan must address the issue of the diversion of water resources from our watersheds to commercial bottlers.

All of these are steps appropriate to our democracy and our moral responsibility to and for one another. We are living in an era in which the future will be significantly discontinuous with our past and that makes it very important that we think deeply and carefully about public policy issues with an eye to serving our residents for the long haul, not just what is convenient for this moment.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree